

**REMARKS**

This is in response to the Official Action currently outstanding with respect to the above-identified application.

This application was originally filed with Claims 1-13. In the currently outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-4 and 11-13 have been rejected, and Claims 5-10 have been objected to by the Examiner.

By the foregoing Amendment, Claim 5 has been cancelled, without prejudice, and its subject matter has been incorporated into Claim 1. Further, conforming amendments have been made to claims 2, 4 and 6. Still further, Applicants have replaced the phrase "first management processing section" with the phrase -- image processing management section -- for purposes of clarity of expression. Finally, Claims 14 and 15 have been added to cover the situation in which if trouble is encountered, time wasteful image processing of improperly inputted image data is prevented.

Accordingly, upon the entry of the foregoing Amendment, Claims 1-4 and 6-15 will remain under active prosecution in this case.

More specifically, it is noted that in the currently outstanding Official Action, the Examiner has:

1. Acknowledged Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 USC 119(a)-(d), and indicated that the required certified copies of the priority document have been received by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

2. Provided Applicants with a copy of a Notice of References Cited (Form PTO 892) and copies of each of the references listed therein.

3. Acknowledged Applicants' Information Disclosure Statement in this case as filed on 18 March 1999, by providing Applicants with a copy of the Form PTO-1449 that accompanied that submission duly signed, initialed and dated by the Examiner to indicate his consideration of the references submitted therewith.

4. Provided Applicants with a copy of a Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (Form PTO-948) that indicates that new drawings with corrected drawings must be filed in this case. Applicants will defer the filing of corrected formal drawings until after their receipt of a Notice of Allowability in this case.

5. Objected to Claim 1 on the basis that the word "said" should be inserted prior to the words "image data" at line 10. This change has been made by the foregoing Amendment.

6. Objected to the Title of the Invention, and required Applicants to provide a new Title of the Invention that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

7. Rejected Claims 1, 2, 3, 4 and 12 under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by the Suzuki et al reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,923,013).

8. Rejected Claim 11 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over the Suzuki et al reference in view of the Morikawa reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,960,247).

9. Rejected Claim 13 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over the Suzuki et al reference in view of the Kusumoto reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,088,135).

10. Indicated that Claims 5-10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. In this regard, Applicants note that the Examiner also has included a statement as to his reasons for the finding of allowable subject matter in Claims 5-10.

The Title of the Invention now has been amended so as to be more clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed. It is believed that the Examiner will agree. However, in the event that the Examiner does not agree, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner call the undersigned by telephone in order that acceptable wording for the Title of the Invention may be agreed upon expeditiously.

With regard to the remainder of the issues raised by the Examiner, it is believed either that those issues require no further comment in these Remarks, or that they are moot in view of the foregoing Amendment. Specifically, the Examiner has indicated that Claims 5-10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. The foregoing Amendment accomplishes this by the cancellation of Claim 5 and the incorporation of its subject matter into Claim 1 (along with certain clarifying and conforming amendments to the remaining claims).

Accordingly, it is believed that Claims 1-4 and 6-13 now are in condition for allowance. This is particularly the case since Claim 1 now constitutes Claim 5 written in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. Also, claims 2-4 and 6-13 now depend either directly or indirectly from allowable Claim 1.

Finally, it is believed that new Claims 14 and 15 incorporate the features indicated by the Examiner as the basis for his allowance of Claims 5-10 in independent form including all of the limitations of their bases claims and any intervening claims. Hence, it is believed that new Claims 14 and 15 presented hereinabove also are in condition for allowance.

For each and all of the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the claims of this application as they will stand upon the entry of the foregoing Amendment are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of this application and the allowance of Claims 1-4 and 6-15 in response to this communication, therefore, are respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that additional fees are not required in connection with the consideration of this response to the currently outstanding Official Action. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge and/or credit Deposit Account No. **04-1105**, as necessary, for the correct payment of all fees which may be due in connection with the filing and consideration of this communication.

Respectfully submitted,

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